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[From the Cincinnati Gazette.]

## Life's Vale of Content.

BY J. HUNT, JR.

To no foreign climes need the pilgrim be sent,  
In quest of that spot, termed "Life's Vale of Content";

Around our own hearthstone its smiles we partake,  
When battling with error for Virtue's dear sake.

How false the delusion, that wealth can impart  
One real enjoyment of peace to the heart;  
Or yield to the bosom those feelings refined,  
Which defy man by a standard of mind.

We darken the future, and vainly deceive  
Our high aspirations, thus led to believe;  
And life loses much of that "comfort and stay,  
Which the world cannot give, nor the world take away."

To feel from the innermost sense, and enjoy  
The warm gush of bliss, that's untouched by alloy,  
Consists in adhering to reason's "still voice,"  
And making the dictates of conscience our choice.

How noble that mortal who's ever the same;  
Unshrinking, adherent, in sunshine and rain;  
Who stands undisturbed amid trouble and fears,  
When frowning misfortune its hydra-head rears.

That breast, which is ruffled as passions arise,  
Like a lake, when the tempest sweeps wildly the skies,  
Has not the pure principle based in the soul, [skies,  
Of him who can meet them, and meeting, control.

The thought, how sustaining! how precious to feel  
That life's many woes often serve to our weal;  
For when the rude winds of affliction have passed,  
How calm is the climate they yield us, at last!

Some cloud of dejection at times may pervade,  
And mantle our hopes by the gloom of its shade;  
But angels of brightness, by mercy are sent,  
To cheer with their presence "Life's Vale of Content."

To thee, O Contentment, we look with delight,  
For blessings by day, for repose through the night;  
So that whatever comes, as our duty to do,  
We may bend to the task, and with purpose pursue.

O, this be our magnet—to never once stray  
From the course which true rectitude points as the way;

That the light of our deeds may so brilliantly shine,  
And influence others with motives divine.

A life thus devoted and tranquilly spent,  
Feels largely the glory of holy content;  
Yea, feels an emotion no tongue can relate,  
And vested with power triumphant o'er fate.

It removes every doubt from the care-laden breast,  
For then with the world we're at peace and at rest;  
Its beauty survives us, when hushed is our breath,  
And we have gone down to the "Valley of Death."

O, kind reader mine, whomsoever thou art,  
I trust an impression is made on thy heart;  
Indeed, if it prove so, how pleased I would be  
To know who's most happy—thy servant, or thee.

## A Singular Story.

The following was published several years ago, and we believe originated from the pen of a Washington letter writer. We revive it on account of its eccentric significance, and commend it to the attention of the Charleston Mercury:

The other morning at the breakfast table, our friend, the Hon. John C. Calhoun, seemed very much agitated and out of spirits.—You know he is altogether a venerable man, with a hard, stern, Scotch-Irish face, softened in its expression around the mouth by a sort of sad smile, which wins the heart of all who converse with him. His hair is white. He is tall, thin, and angular. He reminds you very much of Old Hickory.—That he is honest no one doubts; he has sacrificed to his fatalism his brightest hopes of political advancement—has offered upon the shrine of that necessity which he worships, all that can excite ambition, even the presidency of the United States.

But to my story. The other morning at the breakfast table, where I, an unobserved spectator, happened to be, Calhoun was observed to gaze frequently at his right hand, and brush it frequently with his left, in a hurried and nervous manner. He did this so often as to excite attention. At length one of the persons composing the breakfast party—his name, I think, is Toombs, and he is a

member of congress from Georgia—took upon himself to ask the occasion of Mr. Calhoun's disquietude.

"Does your hand pain you?" he asked. To this Mr. Calhoun replied in a rather hurried manner—"Pshaw! It is nothing! Only a dream which I had last night, and which makes me see perpetually a large black spot—like an ink-blot—upon the back of my right hand. An optical illusion, I suppose."

Of course these words excited the curiosity of the company, but no one ventured to beg the details of this singular dream, until Mr. Toombs asked quietly:

"What was your dream like? I'm not very superstitious about dreams, but sometimes they have a good deal of truth in them."

"But this is such a peculiarly absurd dream," said Mr. Calhoun, again brushing the back of his hand; "however, if it does not intrude too much on the time of our friends, I will relate it to you."

Of course the company were profuse in their expressions of anxiety to know all about the dream. In his singularly sweet voice Mr. Calhoun related it:

"At a late hour last night, as I was sitting in my room engaged in writing, I was astonished by the entrance of a visitor, who entered, and without a word took a seat opposite me at my table. This surprised me, as I had given particular orders to the servant that I should on no account be disturbed. The manner in which the intruder entered, so perfectly self-possessed, taking his seat opposite me, without a word, as tho' my room and all within it belonged to him, excited within me as much surprise as indignation. As I raised my head to look into his features, over the top of my shaded lamp, I discovered that he was wrapped in a thin cloak, which effectually concealed his face and features from my view. And as I raised my head he spoke:

"What are you writing, senator from South Carolina?"

I did not think of his impertinence at first, but answered him involuntarily:

"I am writing a plan for the dissolution of the American Union (you know, gentlemen, that I am to produce a plan of dissolution in the event of certain contingencies)."

To this the intruder replied in the coolest manner possible:

"Senator from South Carolina, will you allow me to look at your hand—your right hand?"

He rose, the cloak fell, and I beheld the face. Gentlemen, the sight of that face struck me like a thunder-clap. It was the face of a dead man, whom extraordinary events had called back to life. The features were those of Gen. George Washington; yes, gentlemen, the intruder was none other than Geo. Washington. He was dressed in the revolutionary costume, such as you see preserved in the Patent Office.

Here Mr. Calhoun paused, apparently much agitated. His agitation, I need not tell you, was shared by the company. Mr. Toombs at length broke the embarrassing pause. "Well, w-e-l-l, what was the issue of that scene?" Mr. Calhoun resumed:

"This intruder, as I have said, rose and asked to look at my right hand. As though I had not the power to refuse, I extended it. The truth is, I felt a strange thrill pervade me at his touch; he grasped it and held it near the light, thus affording me time to examine every feature of his face. It was the face of Washington. Gentlemen, I shuddered as I beheld the horribly dead-alive look of that visage. After holding my hand for a moment, he looked at me steadily and said, in a quiet way:

"And with this right hand, senator from South Carolina, you would sign your name to a paper declaring the Union dissolved?"

I answered in the affirmative—"Yes, if a certain contingency arises, I will sign my name to the declaration of dissolution."—But at that moment a black blotch appeared on the back of my hand—an inky blotch, which I seem to see even now.

"What is that?" said I, alarmed, I know not why, at the spot on my hand.

"That," said he, dropping my hand, "is the mark by which Benedict Arnold is known in the next world."

He said no more, gentlemen, but drew from beneath his cloak an object which he laid on the table—laid it down upon the very paper on which I was writing. That object, gentlemen, was a skeleton.

"There," said he, "are the bones of Isaac Hayne, who was hung in Charleston by the British. He gave his life in order to establish the Union. When you put your name to a declaration of dissolution, why you may as well have the bones of Isaac Hayne before you; he was a South Carolinian, and so are you. But there was no blotch upon his right hand."

With these words the intruder left the room. I started back from the contact with the dead man's bones, and—awoke. Overworn with labor I had fallen asleep and had been dreaming. Was it not a singular one?

All the company answered in the affirmative, and Toombs muttered, "singular, very singular," at the same time looking curiously at the back of his right hand, while Mr. Calhoun placed his head between his hands, and seemed buried in thought.

**DEATH OF SIDNEY C. BURTON.**—The death of Mr. Burton this morning was not an unexpected event to his friends, neither was its approach unlooked for by himself, although his indomitable courage never faltered for a moment. Mr. Burton has been so identified with the notorious Martha Washington case, that his name is familiar far and wide.—Now, that he is gone, justice will probably slumber over the iniquity connected with the burning of that boat, and the subsequent crimes of the most desperate gang of villains which have ever cursed this land, will settle into dull forgetfulness.

Mr. Burton has sacrificed himself to his Herculean efforts to ferret out an iniquity. Even if it cannot be made to appear that he was poisoned by the gang of knaves whose tracks he had long followed, it is certain that his exposures, the dangers he has undergone, and the excitement he has consequently endured, have wrecked as good a constitution as ever man was blessed with. We believe, however, that he has fallen by the murderer's hand; that in some way he was poisoned, although Burton's abstemious habits almost defied all attempts to give him deadly drinks. While sick in New York, a glass of wine was sent to him, with the regards of his landlady, but as Burton never drank wine or spirits, it was untouched, although no design was suspected. It turned out that the landlady did not send it, and, moreover, upon an analysis, it was found to contain poison enough to kill three men.

But Burton is beyond reach of further harm, and with him has passed away a generous, an unselfish, high-minded man. No one would sacrifice more for a friend than Sidney C. Burton, and none will be a greater loss to an attached family.

Mr. Burton carved out his own way, was a man of most active mind, naturally of a high order of talent, enterprising beyond what some might call prudence, persevering, and never discouraged.

We have had special reason to appreciate his friendship, ample opportunities to know his heart, and we feel that the grave closes over one of extraordinary natural endowments, and of enlarged sympathies.—[Cleveland Herald.]